

Operation Doula Care offers support to expectant mothers of deployed spouses

LANCE CPL. JENNIFER BROFER
STAFF WRITER

For expectant military wives whose husbands are currently deployed as a result of Operation Enduring Freedom, there is a program that is willing to help lift the burden of having to go through their pregnancies alone.

As many military wives already know, their husbands could have as little as a day’s notice before being deployed for months at a time. These times are difficult enough -- even more so on an expectant mother who might not get to see her husband until long after their baby is born.

Operation Doula Care is a program that provides physical, emotional and informational support to a pregnant woman before, during, and after the birth of her baby in the form of a Birth Doula, otherwise known as a labor assistant specialist.

A Birth Doulas is a female volunteers who has been trained and certified in helping military expectant mothers throughout their pregnancy, when their husband or a family member is not

able or willing to be there as a labor coach.

A volunteer Doula meets with the expectant mother as least once, if not multiple times, prior to the birth of the baby. She also meets her at the place of birth and stays with her continuously to provide moral support.

Once the baby is born, the Doula will stay for a short while to provide additional support, and even contact the military wife at least once more postpartum.

Doulas may even assist the new mothers in writing a birth story after the child is born.

Though having to go through a pregnancy alone is stressful enough, a Doula can help to ease the anxiety of a husband’s absence during this crucial time in an expectant mother’s life.

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“Having [Operation Doula Care] as an option has helped many of us deal with the trials and tribulations of pregnancy without a partner,” said Patrice Murphy, a mother who used a Doula.

The same feeling echoed with another mother, Seaman Kathy Turner, who said, “I had a beautiful 10 lb., 8 oz. baby boy on March 4. He is so beautiful and the Doula that I had was a huge help. [My Doula], Sacha, was great and she went above and beyond her duty as a Doula to help me and my baby. I couldn’t have gone through this without her help!”

Operation Doula Care is not only helpful for the mother-to-be, but also a rewarding experience for the Doula.

“The mom I helped just couldn’t believe that there are people out there nice enough to do this for others,” said Jennifer Plummer, a Doula volunteer. “No dollar amount could be put on the joy that I received out of helping her and making a difference in her life.”

In order to qualify for the program, the expectant mother must be the wife of a U.S. service member who is deployed as a direct result of OEF, or be the wife of a U.S. service member who has become a casualty as a direct result of OEF. They must also have no immediate family or close friends living in the area who are willing or able be with them and show support for them throughout the birth of their baby.

If the expectant mother qualifies, she will be assigned a Doula who lives closest to her and who will be available around the time of her due date. If no Doulas are available, she will be placed on a waiting list and contacted as soon as one is found.

For more information, call 406-896-9292 or visit their Web site at www.operationdoulacare.org.



Cpl. Alisha Fitzgerald

Corporal Tim Hayes, military policeman, inspects an I.D. of an oncoming visitor at the Depot’s front gate Tuesday. The Depot’s PMO will soon combine with MCAS Beaufort into a single unit to extract maximum effectiveness out of their existing manpower.

PMO,
continued from Page 1

see no reduction in services,” said O’Day. “We don’t want people to have to drive all the way over to the Air Station to take care of something as simple as a driving decal.”

O’Day explained that although there will be a reduction in the

number of PMO personnel stationed on the Depot, the Marine billets scheduled to be eliminated are administrative in nature.

Civilians may fill some of those administrative roles, added O’Day, but, even with the personnel changes, the future need for PMO augmentees to enhance security is still undecided.

The combination of commands is not the only scheduled change for the Depot’s PMO office. PMO, along with the Fire Department and the Emergency Medical Services, is scheduled to move into a brand new facility in the Fall of 2004, located across from the 3rd RTBn. Messhall.

Birthday Ball season is here!

Do you have a dress for the Ball?

Borrow a dress from the Ball Gown Locker for free!

They have dresses in every shape and style including maternity.

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Paving the way...



Lance Cpl. Jennifer Brofer

Employees of Rea Construction Company lay down asphalt to repave Shanghai Street near Leatherneck Square Aug. 26. The road was repaved from Wake Boulevard to Alaska Street as part of the Depot’s continuing efforts to improve quality of life for Marines.